

PS VITA

a treatment by Keith Schofield



CAV/AR

introduction

Hey 180,

Thanks for the opportunity to have a look at your scripts for Playstation Vita.

These scripts are about the merger of two different realities - the outer reality, the world we all live in, and that other, more select world, only for the initiated: the gamer's world.

As a concept, it offers some interesting possibilities.

How do we best portray the existence of these multiple realities?

What's it look like when these worlds collide?

How can we make it as visually striking as the idea demands?

I've had a good think about this, and I would like to share some thoughts.



my take on the idea

In many ways, this script is like the famous Sony 'Balls' tvc.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DrFY3H-u8w>

It is non-narrative, instead offering the viewer a simulated version of the experience, a stylized representation of what it feels like to use the product.

Instead of a storyline, it evokes a visceral, literal experience.

A key difference with the Vita scripts is that there are TWO visualizations of the Playstation Vita experience:

1. The slow motion of time that occurs when you are caught in an intense, all-consuming experience.
2. The re-enactment of scenes from the games in real life - gripping the console as a gun, steering wheel etc.; another demonstration of the intensity of the experience.

However, to maximize the visual dramatics of these techniques, I believe we need a certain point where both these ideas happen at exactly the same moment.



my take on the idea (contd)

That means we begin each sequence at regular speed, with our hero playing the Playstation Vita. Then, at a specific point, our film slows down. My idea is to keep the hero character grounded in reality, playing his Vita in the real world, but then show duplicate versions of himself, flying around his body, re-enacting the scenes from the game.

Take a look at this animatic I put together:

<http://keithschofield.com/treatments/vita/vita.m4v>

Really basic animation, but you get the idea.

The camera moves in on the actor going from normal speed to slo-mo as it approaches. At first all we notice is the young man's intense focus on his Vita. But suddenly, thanks to some ingenious post involving CGI, doppelgangers emerge from the central character, striking choreographed poses relevant to that particular game. We observe them for a few seconds before the camera continues on.

Essentially, we hone in on a moment – and then see the excitement that our players are having.



my take on the idea (contd)

There are a lot of reasons I would like to pursue this approach:

Visually, it could be fantastic. Maximum impact, without complicating the idea or the process. In terms of conveying product involvement and the range of experience within each game, it paints a much bigger picture. Our person's doppelgangers can be dressed in different outfits playing different roles within each game. This multiplies our choreographic options and allows for greater interplay. Certain scenes like the machine gunning can play much bigger because we don't have to ground the doppelgangers in reality.

By keeping our hero at the centre and still functioning in the real world we see both realities at the same time, thereby strengthening the contrast between them. Each doppelganger would also be holding a Playstation Vita –so no problems about not seeing the product. And finally, multiple doppelgangers offer offbeat comic potential. Imagine at a certain action crescendo they all suddenly struck a pose like this:

<http://keithschofield.com/treatments/vita/spin.gif>

Again, a simple animated gif, but it would be cool and kind of silly if at a particular high point in the action, our doppelgangers just started doing a bit of mid-air planking and rotated around our hero.



a few technical notes

Super slo-mo is brilliant at accentuating things- the athletic, the intense, but also the comic and the silly. It gives us time to study things. Little wonder that at key moments in our lives, intense moments, time seems to stand still.

Here's another ad using slo-mo to convey an experience.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV_drmDNE0c

This ad was shot at 10,000 frames a second, using a German ultra high speed camera called a Weisscam.

But for our commercials, 10,000 fps is probably overkill.

Here's something shot on a Phantom camera, at 1,000 fps.

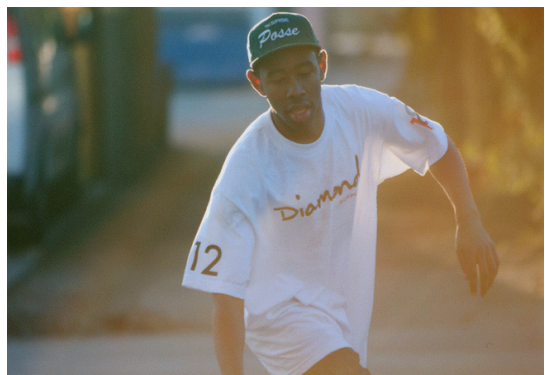
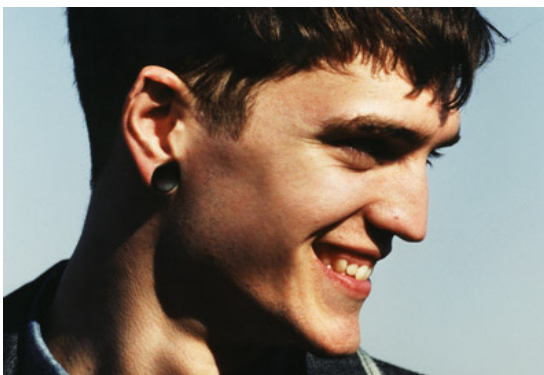
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wlnu2Om_bEc

Remember, this is a raw camera test. Further enhancement of slo-mo could be achieved in the online edit.

For this job, I'd like to use the Phantom, probably shooting at a frame rate between 500-1000FPS on ultra prime lenses to keep the action sharp and real.

This equipment will allow us to shoot in a range of lighting conditions, which will bring richness and variety to the look of the piece. By not being dependent on complicated lighting re-sets, it will also give us time to explore different angles to capture the action on the day.

My aim is to not only make the film a glorious spectacle to watch, but also visually lush.



casting

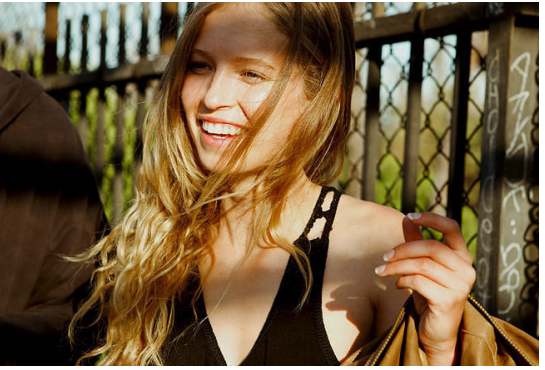
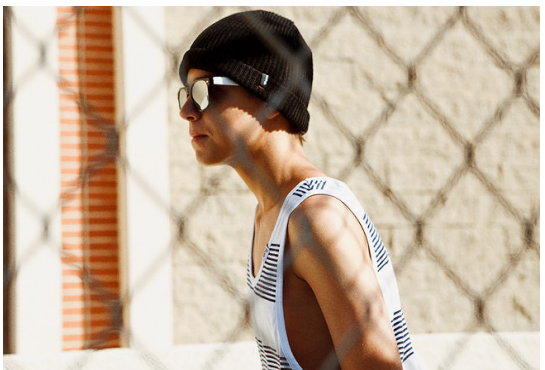
Our principal gamers are all archetypes of their age. Cool young hipsters, urban dwellers, tribespeople. They wear the uniforms of their times: sharp haircuts, piercings, streetwise clothes. Pretty young things.

I mentioned earlier that slo-mo is great at accentuating movement. That applies as much to the clumsy and uncoordinated as it does to the graceful and athletic.



We have to cast accordingly. As cool as they look, if individuals can't move gracefully, they are out. We will start by looking at dancers and anyone with gymnast training, and in the case of the 'FIFA 13' sequences, guys with soccer skills.

In terms of any featured extras for the 'everyday' sequences, we will be keeping slo-mo in mind, as we cast them too. So we'll be on the lookout for the jowly guy, the woman with the extra large mouth, the child with the huge expressive eyes, or any other quirky, comic potential we can find.



locations

Six all up, three for 'Teens' and three for 'Tweens.'

The 'Teens' ad should be set in a faceless metropolis, a cross between an urban jungle and a city at war. Indeed, the urban rooftops we begin on should reflect the world of 'Call of Duty'.

It should be late afternoon, with the sun low and bleeding, a haze (Pollution? Or smoke from battles?) in the distant sky. A landscape of vents, chimneys and bent TV aerials, counterpointed nicely by the twee old domestic lounges the teenagers are grouped around.

The subway is again generically urban. Staircases, iron pylons, benches and stark lighting.

The 'sportsground' has an inner city feel to it. Bare and treeless, an expanse of cement tarmac, cracked at the edges where the weeds are pushing through. Cyclone fencing to shoot through. Urban landscape in the background.

The 'Tweens' locations are similarly urban, but slightly less grungy.

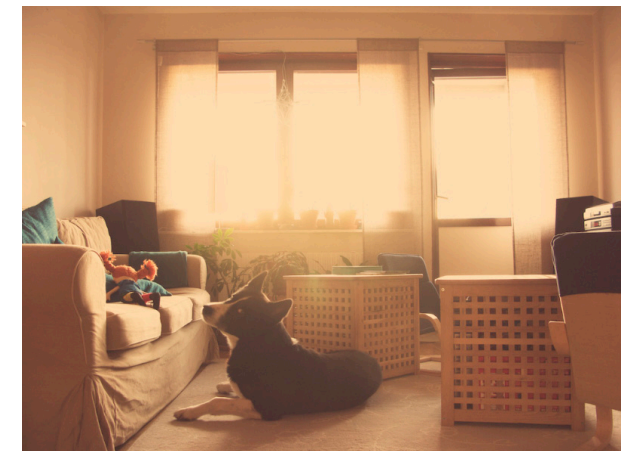


locations (contd)

The bus stop is a street in the 'burbs. It is a covered structure, and our hero gamer could be on his way to school.

The café is part of a larger expanse: a food hall in a shopping mall. Lots of lights twinkling, graphic elements, color and movement in the background. The background tables may contain other extras whom we aim to feature, such as someone biting into an overly thick sandwich that falls apart.

And finally the living room – a comfortable, middle class home, well maintained and nicely (but conventionally) decorated – the last place you'd expect to see a hand-to-hand fight to the death, a la 'Battle Royale'. The dog's eyeline, watching the doppelgangers strut their stuff, contrasted with the mother's obliviousness as she continues vacuuming, could provide comic contrast here.



transitions

Essentially, the camera is narrator here, guiding the viewer along.

It will travel at three speeds: fast, normal and super-slo. Fast is the ramping effect, using a speed ramp; that effect will get us from scene to scene.

The film will then slow down momentarily to normal time, to establish the new setting and gamer.

As the camera continues to move in, we then go into super-slo, right before the doppelgangers reveal themselves.

Eventually, we are out of slo-mo and back to another transition, as the camera shoots past the gamer.

The ramping transitions using camera POVs give an almost documentary sense to the piece, like the camera is prowling around to find different gamers in their own worlds. But we shouldn't make too much of that.

Having said that, we should also use some form of sound design incorporating the music track to help punctuate the ramping.

There will be cuts, but on the move, barely affecting the flow of the piece.



art direction

I feel that to add an element of quirkiness to our locations, we should have touches of the slightly surreal looming in the back round. You mentioned that PlayStation have some brand Pillar's and that they have highlighted the people in the back round as a place where we can have these moments of irreverent humour. I would like to extend this idea to not only the performance, but also to include interesting and inventive props. This is something I have done in the past to great effect. We should use subtle objects here and there, things that you might not notice till the second time you watch the film, that will make the viewer chuckle. The images on the following page are examples from films that I have used this type of art direction in.

art direction



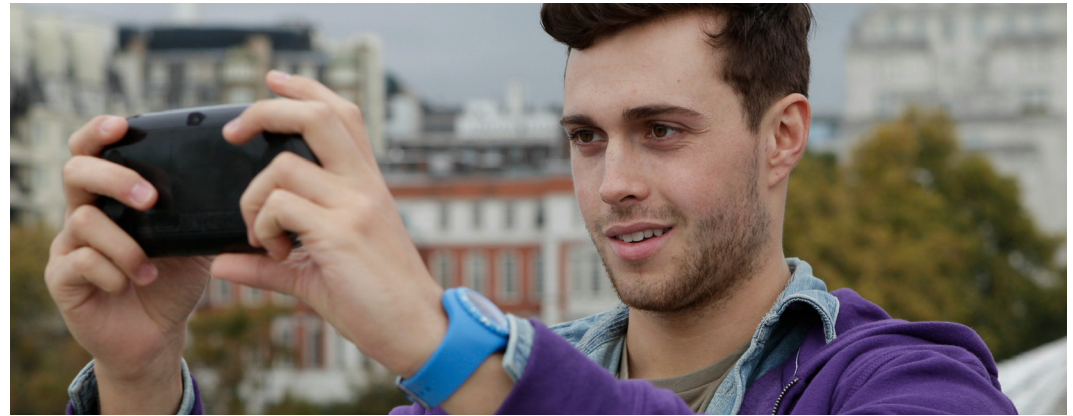
product shots

I think it's important that the action sequence we see of each game on the Vita screen matches the choreographed moves of our doppelgangers.

So we need to select that footage first, based on the visual and comic potential for our cloned gamers.

We then need to translate that sequence into real life dance and acrobatics, then create and rehearse a choreography for it, before finally filming each of our gamer heroes in multiple costumes for later insertion into the composite master.

So it's a bit more than just choosing any random action, and in fact, it's an important early step in the project.



music and v/o

I think slow motion works best with a big energetic contrast. So I want to avoid anything too pretty or sensitive. Just a good driving beat and plenty of musicality. Most of my ideas are big and loud with a hint of anarchy. I've thrown in some dancier songs, too.

The Shoes "America"

(ignore the lyrics)

<http://keithschofield.com/music-ideas/the-shoes-america.mp3>

Civil Civic "Street Trap"

<http://keithschofield.com/music-ideas/civil-civic-street-trap.mp3>

Goose "Synrise"

<http://keithschofield.com/music-ideas/goose-SYNRISE.mp3>

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Van She "Idea of Happiness" (Sebastian Remix)

<http://keithschofield.com/music-ideas/van-she-Idea-Of-Happiness.mp3>

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Simian Mobile Disco "It's the Beat" (Teenagers Remix)

<http://keithschofield.com/music-ideas/simian-mobile-disco-Its-the-beat-teenagers.mp3>

The voiceover will be male, but I would prefer to select a music track first, before casting for the right voice.



outro

These scripts are titled “New Ways to Play”.

Let’s find a new way to show play.

Let’s do something that’s as visually arresting as it is cool and just that bit oddball.

I don’t think we need to be reverential to the ads in this category that have gone before us, nor their tone of voice.

The Vita is new. Let’s make it feel new.

Let’s give it the Schofield treatment.